EXAMINER'S AMENDMENT

An examiner's amendment to the record appears below. Should the changes and/or additions be unacceptable to applicant, an amendment may be filed as provided by 37 CFR 1.312. To ensure consideration of such an amendment, it MUST be submitted no later than the payment of the issue fee.

Authorization for this examiner's amendment was given in a telephone interview with Jonathan Roberts for Raymond Mah Reg. No. 41,426 on 3/4/2011.

The application has been amended as follows:

In Claim 1, replace "operable by the player" on page 5, about line 5 of the amended claims filed on 3/7/2011 with – operated by the player --.

In Claim 6, replace "whether or not" on page 4, about line 3 and "when it is determined by said end determining programmed logic circuitry that" on page 4, about lines 5-6 of the amended claims filed on 3/7/2011 with – whether – and – when said end determining programmed logic circuitry determines that --, respectively.

In Claim 7, replace "operable by the player" on page 4, about line 20, "hand-held game or an operation from said operating unit" on page 5, about line 3, and "second game-program storage area or an operation" on page 5, about line 15 of the amended claims filed on 3/7/2011 with – operated by the player --, – hand-held game and an

operation from said operating member --, and -- second game-program storage area and an operation --.

In Claim 9, replace "operable by the player" on page 6, about line 5, "whether or not" on page 6, about line 18 and "when it is determined by said end determining programmed logic circuitry that" on page 6, about lines 20-21 of the amended claims filed on 3/7/2011 with – operated by the player --, – whether –, and – when said end determining programmed logic circuitry determines that –, respectively.

In Claim 10, replace "operable by the player" on page 7, about line 12, "hand-held game or an operation" on page 7, about line 15, "second game-program storage area or an operation" on page 5, about line 15, and "whether or not" on page 8, about line 8 of the amended claims filed on 3/7/2011 with – operated by the player –, -- hand-held game and an operation --, -- second game-program storage area and an operation --, and – whether --, respectively.

In Claim 11, replace "based on an operation" on page 9, about line 3 of the amended claims filed on 3/7/2011 with – based on said game program and an operation --.

In Claim 12, replace "based on an operation" on page 10, about line 8 of the amended claims filed on 3/7/2011 with – based on said game program and an operation --.

In Claim 13, replace "based on an operation" on page 11, about line 1 and "whether or not" on page 11, about line 3 of the amended claims filed on 3/7/2011 with – based on said game program and an operation – and – whether --, respectively.

In Claim 14, replace "computer-readable storage medium" on page 11, about line 10, "based on an operation" on page 12, about line 8, and "whether or not" on page 12, about line 9 of the amended claims filed on 3/7/2011 with – non-transitory computer-readable storage medium –, – based on said game program and an operation –, and – whether --.

Reasons for Allowance

The following is an examiner's statement of reasons for allowance:

The closest prior art for the features of the claimed invention are Oakes et al. (US Patent Application Publication 2003/0181241; hereinafter Oakes), Suzuki et al. (US Patent 5,356,156), Sciammarella et al. (US Patent 6,608,633; hereinafter Sciammarella), and Kaneko et al. (US Patent 5,879,235; hereinafter Kaneko).

However, Oakes alone or in combination with Suzuki, Sciammarella and Kaneko does not disclose a game apparatus, game system, non-transitory computer-readable storage medium, and method that comprise:

"having a video game machine connected to a common display and a plurality of hand-held game machines including a separate display connected to said video game machine, said game system comprising: an exchanging portion configured to exchange data between said video game machine and said hand-held game machine; and an evaluating value setter configured to set an evaluating value of each player based on how well each player is doing in the game relative to the other players; wherein said hand-held game machine, includes: at least one first game-program storage area configured to store a program for a player's own hand-held game; an operating member operated by the player; first game-image generating programmed logic circuitry configured to generate a separate game image to be displayed on said separate display based on said program for a player's own hand-held game and an operation from said operating member; and said video game machine, includes: at least one second game-program storage area configured to store an operating program for the video game machine and a program for an interlocking game; number-of-players detecting programmed logic circuitry configured to detect the number of players who participate in the game; screen partitioning programmed logic circuitry configured to partition a display area included in a common screen to be displayed on said common display in correspondence with the number of the participating players, and configured to form a plurality of divided areas; second game-image generating programmed logic circuitry configured to generate game images in each of said divided areas allotted to each player based on the program stored in said second game-program storage area and an operation from said operating member received by said exchanging portion; and size changing programmed logic circuitry configured to change a size of said divided areas allotted to each player based on said evaluating value set by said evaluating value setter," **or**, "having a video game machine connected to a common display and a plurality of hand-held game machines including a separate

display connected to said video game machine, said game machine comprising: exchanging programmed logic circuitry configured to exchange data between said video game machine and said hand-held game machine; wherein said hand-held game machine, includes: at least a first game-program storage area configured to store a program for a player's own hand-held game; an operating member operated by the player; first game-image generating programmed logic circuitry configured to generate a separate game image to be displayed on said separate display based on said program for a player's own hand-held game and an operation from said operating member; and said video game machine, includes: at least a second game-program storage area configured to store an operating program for the video game machine and a program for an interlocking game; number-of-players detecting programmed logic circuitry configured to detect the number of players who participate in the game; screen partitioning programmed logic circuitry configured to partition the display area included in a common screen to be displayed on said common display in correspondence with the number of the participating players, and configured to form a plurality of divided areas; second game-image generating programmed logic circuitry configured to generate game images in each of said divided areas allotted to each player based on the program stored in said second game-program storage area and an operation from said operating member received by said exchanging portion; end determining programmed logic circuitry configured to determine whether there is a player who ends the game out of the participating players; and re-partitioning programmed logic circuitry configured to re- partition said display area by the number of the remaining players when determined by said determining portion that there is the player who ends the game, and configured to allot the re-divided areas to the remaining players in accordance with how the remaining players are performing in the game relative to one another," **or**, "a game program configured to change a plurality of divided areas on a common screen in a game system having a video game machine connected to a common display, and a plurality of hand-held game machines including an operating member operated by a player and a separate display connected to said video game system, wherein a plurality of players participate and play the game on said common

screen displayed on said common display and a separate screen displayed on said separate display, said game program allows a computer of said hand-held game machine to execute steps comprising: transferring an operation from said operating member to said video game generating a separate game image to be displayed on said separate display based on the operation from said operating unit; and said game program allows a computer of said video game machine to execute steps comprising: receiving an operation from said hand-held game machine; detecting the number of the players who participate in the game; partitioning a display area included in said common screen in correspondence with the number of the participating players, and forming said plurality of divided areas; generating game images in each of said divided areas allotted to each player based on said game program and an operation received by said operation receiving step; setting an evaluating value of each player based on how well each player is doing in the game relative to the other players; and changing a size of said divided areas allotted to each player based on said evaluating value," **or**, "an executable game program configured to change a plurality of divided areas on a common screen in a game system having a video game machine connected to a common display, and a plurality of hand-held game machines including an operating unit operated by a player and a separate display connected to the video game machine, wherein a plurality of players participate and play the game on said common screen displayed on said common display and a separate screen displayed on said separate display, said game program enabling a computer of said game apparatus to execute steps comprising: transferring an operation from said operating unit to said video game machine; and generating a separate game image to be displayed on said separate display based on the operation from said operating unit; and said game program enables a computer of said video game machine to execute steps comprising: receiving an operation from said hand-held game machine; detecting the number of players who participate in the game; partitioning a display area included in said common screen in correspondence with the number of the participating players, and forming said plurality of divided areas; generating game images in each of said divided areas allotted to each player based on said game program and an operation received by said

operation receiving step; determining whether there is the player who ends the game out of the participating players; and re-partitioning said display area by the number of the remaining players when determined by said determining step that there is a player who ends the game, and allotting the re-divided areas to the remaining players in accordance with how the remaining players are performing in the game relative to one another," **or**, "relative game progress in a competitive game displayed on at least one display screen, the method comprising: partitioning the display screen area into plural partitions; assigning each partition to a different player in one-to-one correspondence so that each player is assigned exactly one partition; determining, as the game progresses, how each player is performing relative to the other players, based on game factors other than the size of a player's partition; and dynamically changing the relative sizes of the display screen partitions, based on how each player is performing in the game as determined by the determining, such that the players are given a visual indication of their relative performance within the game through the size of the display screen area allocated to them, such that a first player who is beating a second player in the game is allocated a larger display screen partition than the second player."

Thus, the claimed invention is not anticipated by nor obvious over the closest prior art.

Any comments considered necessary by applicant must be submitted no later than the payment of the issue fee and, to avoid processing delays, should preferably accompany the issue fee. Such submissions should be clearly labeled "Comments on Statement of Reasons for Allowance."

Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to ARTHUR O. HALL whose telephone number is

(571)270-1814. The examiner can normally be reached on Mon - Fri, 8:00am - 5:00 pm, Alt Fri, EST.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Peter Vo can be reached on (571) 272-4690. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 571-273-8300.

Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see http://pair-direct.uspto.gov. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free). If you would like assistance from a USPTO Customer Service Representative or access to the automated information system, call 800-786-9199 (IN USA OR CANADA) or 571-272-1000.

/Arthur O Hall/
Primary Examiner, Art Unit 3718